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Pa. action on opioids applauded

But health officials say more needs to be done

By Liz Navratil and Rich Lord
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

HARRISBURG — Health officials in Western Pennsylvania and families of people struggling with addiction cautiously embraced Gov. Tom Wolf's decision Wednesday to declare the opioid crisis a disaster emergency.

But many said they're still waiting for additional, more drastic changes to come.

"How many times have we heard that we're going to put together a group, and this one is going to be different than the old one?" said Karl Williams, the Allegheny County medical examiner. "I'm getting very jaded by all of this."

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Congressional task force outlines new drug policy.
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The Democratic governor, at a news conference Wednesday afternoon at the state Capitol, said the declaration he signed is "not a silver bullet."

It allows the state to respond to the opioid epidemic as it would to a natural disaster, temporarily lifting regulations that could hamper response efforts.

For example, emergency medical workers now likely will be able to leave naloxone, a drug administered in overdose cases, with people who are reluctant to

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SURVEYING THE DAMAGE

Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Residents stand on a home that was destroyed by a mudslide in Montecito, Calif. At least seventeen people have died and hundreds are still stranded after massive mudslides crashed through the town early Tuesday. **Story on A-5.**

Roethlisberger makes deal to open North Shore restaurant

By Mark Belko
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Ben Roethlisberger's days on the North Shore won't end whenever he retires.

The Steelers quarterback has completed a deal to open a 7,100-square-foot restaurant in the seven-story office building now under construction on North Shore Drive near PNC Park and across the street from the Hyatt Place hotel.

With the signing, Mr. Roethlisberger will be reunited with his former backfield mate Jerome Bettis, who has his own restaurant on North Shore Drive just a couple of blocks away.

The quarterback will become the latest high-profile sports celebrity to open a restaurant in the region.

Mr. Roethlisberger's ex-teammate Hines Ward has a restaurant in Seven Fields. Mike Ditka, an Aliquippa native and former Pitt tight end who played for and coached the Chicago Bears, has restaurants in Robinson and Pine.

In addition, ex-Pirate Manny Sanguillen has Manny's BBQ at PNC Park, and former Pitt and Miami Dolphins quarterback Dan

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Federal court leaves state's congressional map in place

By Michaelle Bond
Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA — A panel of federal judges Wednesday effectively upheld Pennsylvania's often-criticized congressional district map, declining to take up a novel challenge that sought to have it declared unconstitutional as gerrymandered to favor the party in power.

In a 2-1 decision, the judges said that specific challenge was not for them to decide.

Plaintiffs in Agre v. Wolf, led by a Democratic ward leader from Philadelphia, had hoped to use the Elections Clause of the U.S. Constitution to argue that any amount of partisanship in drawing the state's congressional maps was illegal.

The congressional boundaries in question were drawn by the Republican-controlled Legislature in 2011 after the 2010 census.

"Although there may be a case in which a political gerrymandering claim may successfully be brought under the Elections Clause, this is not such a case," wrote Judge Patty Shwartz of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

"The structural change plaintiffs seek must come from the political process itself, not the courts," concluded D. Brooks Smith, the

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Gregorio Borgia/Associated Press

Pope Francis poses for a picture with Italian Finance Police cadets and officers during the weekly general audience Wednesday at the Vatican.

Pope offering indulgences for attending anti-abortion march

By Peter Smith
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pope Francis is offering an indulgence — a centuries-old practice involving the cancellation of certain spiritual debts — to any Catholic who attends the annual anti-abortion March for Life in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 19, and who participates in related acts of piety.

This is believed to be the first time in the 45-year history of the annual march that a pope has offered an indulgence to participants, according to the Archdiocese of Washington. In peak years the march has drawn hundreds of thousands of attendees, many but not all of them Catholics.

The march is held on the National Mall each year to mark the anniversary of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision in which the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion. This year's march comes at a time of political strength for abortion opponents, with allies in the Trump administration and a newly seated conservative Supreme Court justice in Neil Gorsuch.

Pope Francis is offering a "plenary" or full indulgence for participants who are "truly penitential

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